

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for selecting hierarchical information with a computer
2 system user interface, the method comprising steps of:

3 recognizing selection of an element in a hierarchy;
4 determining a plurality of ancestor elements for the element;
5 providing a selection control with the computer system user interface,
6 wherein the selection control allows selecting at least one of the plurality of ancestor
7 elements hierarchically-related to the element;
8 recognizing manipulation of the selection control; and
9 selecting a unit that comprises at least one of the plurality of ancestor
10 elements and the element in response to the second-listed recognizing step.

1 2. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, further comprising steps of:

3 associating a trigger with the unit; and
4 notifying a user when unit changes and the trigger occurs.

1 3. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises
3 a step of selecting all descendent elements for any of the plurality of ancestor elements in
4 the unit.

1 4. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection control allows
3 selecting a plurality of sibling elements related to one of the element and the plurality of
4 ancestor elements.

1 5. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the providing step
3 comprises steps of:

4 providing a plurality of sibling elements related to at least one of the
5 element and the plurality of ancestor elements; and
6 providing a user-manipulatable control that allows selecting a path through
7 the plurality of sibling elements and plurality of ancestor elements wherein crossed
8 elements and their respective descendent elements comprise the unit.

1 6. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the hierarchy is derived
3 from an hypertext markup language (HTML) page.

1 7. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step of building
3 a document object model from an HTML page.

1 8. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the providing step
3 comprises steps of:

4 providing a range of ancestor elements of the element along a sliding
5 scale; and

6 providing a user-manipulatable slider that indicates a selected ancestor
7 element in the range of ancestor elements.

1 9. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the hierarchy represents one
3 of:

4 a software program with nesting;

5 a HTML file;

6 an extensible markup language (XML) document; and

7 an organization chart.

1 10. The method for selecting hierarchical information with the
2 computer system user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the second-listed
3 recognizing step comprises steps of at least one of:

4 recognizing selection of one of the plurality of ancestor elements in the
5 hierarchy; and

6 recognizing selection of a sibling element in the hierarchy.

1 11. A method for selecting hypertext markup language (HTML)
2 information with a computer system user interface, the method comprising steps of:

3 receiving an HTML file from a server wherein the HTML file has a
4 hierarchy;

5 rendering an HTML web page corresponding to the HTML file;
6 recognizing selection of an element in the hierarchy;
7 recognizing manipulation of a selection control; and
8 selecting a unit in response to the second-listed recognizing step wherein
9 the unit comprises at least one of a plurality of ancestor elements and the element.

1 12. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, further comprising a step of determining the
3 hierarchy for the HTML file.

1 13. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, wherein the rendering step comprises a step
3 of rendering the HTML web page corresponding to the HTML file without visible
4 modification.

1 14. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, wherein the unit comprises at least two items
3 chosen from the element, the plurality of ancestor elements and a sibling element.

1 15. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, receiving a triggering condition that triggers
3 an alert if the unit changes to satisfy the triggering condition.

1 16. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, further comprising a step of receiving a
3 triggering condition from a user related to the element.

1 17. The method for selecting HTML information with the computer
2 system user interface as recited in claim 11, further comprising steps of:
3 producing a processed web page related to the HTML web page, wherein
4 the producing step comprising steps of:
5 deactivating active elements within the HTML web page, and
6 embedding a selection script into the HTML web page, wherein the
7 selection script provides the selection control;

1 18. A method for allowing selection of snippets from a web page, the
2 method comprising steps of:

3 producing a processed web page related to the web page, wherein the
4 producing step comprising steps of:

5 deactivating active elements within the web page, and

6 embedding a selection script into the web page, wherein the

7 selection script provides a selection control;

8 recognizing selection of an element in a hierarchy that is related to the
9 processed web page;

10 determining a plurality of ancestor elements hierarchically-related to the
11 element;

12 recognizing manipulation of the selection control, wherein the selection
13 control allows selecting at least one of the plurality of ancestor elements; and

14 selecting a unit that comprises at least one of the plurality of ancestor
15 elements and the element in response to the second-listed recognizing step.

1 19. The method for allowing selection of snippets from the web page
2 as recited in claim 18, further comprising steps of:

3 determining a plurality of probable snippets for the web page;

4 adding functionality to the web page to allow selection of the plurality of
5 probable snippets; and

6 receiving input selecting one of the plurality of probable snippets.

1 20. The method for allowing selection of snippets from the web page
2 as recited in claim 18, receiving an address for the web page by a semi-proxy.

1 21. The method for allowing selection of snippets from the web page
2 as recited in claim 18, further comprising steps of:

3 associating a trigger with the unit; and

4 notifying a user when unit changes and the trigger occurs.

1 22. The method for allowing selection of snippets from the web page
2 as recited in claim 18, wherein the processed web page has no visual differences from the
3 web page.

1 23. The method for allowing selection of snippets from the web page
2 as recited in claim 18, wherein the determining step comprises a step of analyzing a
3 document object model related to the processed web page.

1 24. A software product embodied on a computer-readable medium for
2 selecting hierarchical information with a computer system user interface, the software
3 product comprising code for:

4 recognizing selection of an element in a hierarchy;

5 determining a plurality of ancestor elements for the element;

6 providing a selection control with the computer system user interface,

7 wherein the selection control allows selecting at least one of the plurality of ancestor
8 elements hierarchically-related to the element;

9 recognizing manipulation of the selection control; and

10 selecting a unit that comprises at least one of the plurality of ancestor

11 elements and the element in response to the second-listed recognizing step.